

DWELL DEEP, O DEDAN!

NO. 1085

A SERMON
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*“Dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan.”
Jeremiah 49:8.*

WE do not quite know who these inhabitants of Dedan were, but in all probability they were some Arabian tribe or tribes. Perhaps they were descendants of Keturah; they probably dwelt in the rock city of Petra, and were mingled with the Edomites. The prophet warned them that God was about to destroy the Edomites: “For I have sworn by Myself, says the Lord, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes.” And the text intends one of two things—either to inform these inhabitants of Dedan that however deep in the cavernous rocks they should hide themselves, they would certainly be destroyed; or else it was a gracious warning to leave Edom, strike their tents, and retreat into the depths of the wilderness, and so escape the invaders. I find the marginal reference of my Comprehensive Bible says, “This is an allusion to the custom of the Arabs, who, when attacked by a powerful foe, withdrew into the wilderness. Always on their guard against tyranny, on the least discontent that is given them, they pack up their tents, load their camels with them, ravage the country, and, laden with plunder, they retire into the burning sands where none can pursue them, and so *“dwell deep.”* We will take our text in the two senses I have indicated. “Dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan.” This may be understood sarcastically and instructively; let us pray that to us, in both senses, it may be instructive. From ancient warnings let us gather present benefit.

I. Let us take it **SARCASTICALLY**. It is as though the prophet said to these Edomites and those that dwelt with them—“You think you never can be destroyed, for your city is situated in a rocky region where a handful of men can hold the pass; you suppose that the mightiest armies will fail to conquer you, and therefore you are very proud, but your pride is vain. Your terribleness has deceived you and the pride of your heart, O you that dwell in the clefts of the rock that hold the height of the hill: though you should make your nest as high as the eagle, I will bring you down from there, says the Lord.” That word has been terribly fulfilled, for the ancient rock city stands as a wonder to all travelers, and when they ride through it, which is not often, for it is with great difficulty that you reach the place at all, they find the city standing, but the houses desolate and without inhabitants. Edom is a perpetual desolation because of her sins; though they carved their houses into solid rock, and their city seemed out of the spoiler’s reach, God has laid His hands upon it, and its life, as well as its beauty, is gone forever! Thus said the Lord, and so it has come to pass, “Also Edom shall be desolation: everyone that goes by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbor cities thereof, says the Lord, no man shall abide there; neither shall a son of man dwell in it.”

From the text I hear a cry, like the stern voice of Elijah, to every profane sinner who thinks that he will ultimately escape the wrath of God! You may dwell deep, O transgressor, but God shall find you out. You say, “How shall He reach me?” The hand of death has only to be stretched out, and you are his captive at once! And a little thing will do it—the wind has but to pass over you, and you are gone; a drop of blood may go the wrong way, a valve may refuse to open, a vessel may burst, a band may snap, and there you lie beneath God’s avenging hands like a stag struck by the hunter! You are dust, and a breath will scatter you to the four winds! Your *spirit* will be equally unable to escape from God; when it leaves this body, where will it fly? It finds itself naked and disembodied, and straight before it is the throne of God, and the seat made ready for judgment! Devils shall drag the guilty spirit down to hell, and bind it with links of infinite despair. And when the Day of Judgment shall have fully come, and the *body* shall have risen, and the entire man shall stand before God, there will be no escape for the sinner!

The eyes of Christ will look into the face of every man and woman born who shall stand upon the earth and upon the sea in the dread day of wrath, and that will ensure the eternal condemnation of all the unbelieving! No one will be in so far off a country that the Judge will not see him, nor will he be able to find a cavern or deep mine where he shall be able to conceal himself from the face of Him that sits upon the throne! Then will the ungodly bitterly desire to dwell deep; they will call to the rocks to hide them, and to the hills to fall upon them, but all in vain, for thus says the Lord—"Though they climb up to heaven, there will I bring them down; and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out from there; and though they are hid from My sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them."

Darkness will not be able to conceal you! The glance of the Judge's eyes shall shrivel up the vesture of night and lay all things bare! O, guilty, Christless soul, there is no escape from God! Though you dwell deep as hell, even there would He find you! In the days of the old Roman Empire, the whole world was so completely under the Imperial sway that if a man once transgressed against Caesar, he was imprisoned already, for all the nations were but one great Roman prison. If a man fled to the uttermost ends of the earth, he would still find the Roman legionary to arrest, and the Roman lictor to punish him! Behold, the universe is thus surrounded by Jehovah's Imperial forces! Earth, hell, and heaven are the Lord's! To where, then, can you flee? Do what you will; you are always before His eyes, and always within reach of His hands. "Dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan," but in vain shall be all your craft and cunning concealments, for God will assuredly find you out!

The same solemn warning may be applied to those who are self-righteous, and who think that they are forming a hiding place for themselves. I would turn to them and say, "You think that you will save yourselves by your works; ah, labor mightily, for hard must be your toil if you think to finish a righteousness of your own! You would make a dwelling for yourself as secure as the Rock of Ages? You had need build anxiously! I do not wonder that you are ill at ease; I wonder you have any peace, for the labors which you propose are more stupendous than those of Hercules! You would work miracles without the God of miracles! Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! Like Babel's tower, self-righteous efforts will end in failure, and abide only as a monument of folly." I could gladly, if I were in that humor, speak to the self-righteous with bitter irony, as did Elijah to the false prophets when he said of Baal, "Cry aloud, for he is a god!" If, indeed, there is salvation by works, wear your fingers to the bone, and your bodies to skeletons! Weep out your eyes with penances, and furrow your backs with chastisements! You plow the desert sand, and sow the salt sea; plow on, sow on you fools! Rest in your sacraments and your priests! Be born-again in sprinkling! Be confirmed by Episcopal hands, and then eat your bread god! Get up at the daily tinkling of your bell to adore the flour and water which you both worship and swallow! Get on your knees and repeat your Paternosters, and your Ave Marias—and count your beads! Fast not only on Fridays, but on all days of the week, and put on your hair shirts, and wear a belt of spikes! You have need to do many such things, for no little matters will quiet conscience, and give the soul peace! To fill a bottomless tub with water is nothing to the labor of self-salvation! To build a house with bubbles, twist a rope of sand, or weld an anchor of spray were easier, by far.

Fools! Can sinners keep a perfect law? Can finite effort satisfy infinite justice? Can a bankrupt, without a penny, put his creditor under obligations? Can a vile worm deserve anything at the hands of the thrice holy God? Ah, 'tis folly altogether! "By the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified." "By the law is the knowledge of sin," and nothing more! All the efforts that a man can make to earn heaven must end in disappointment and despair. "You must be born-again." You must believe in Christ Jesus! You must be saved through His great salvation. There is no hope for you, O you who are dwelling deep in your own works! It is a sorry, sorry dwelling. I will not use the text to you sarcastically, as I might, but I will rather say, flee from your good works as you would flee from your sins! Have no more confidence in your goodness than in your badness, for if you rely on what you do that is good, you will be as surely lost as if you had depended upon your sins! Whether the sand is white or red is small consequence—in either case it is a bad foundation. You need a better basis, even that which was laid of old by God in the covenant of grace, even Christ Jesus, the rock of our salvation!

The same text, in the same way, might be applied to those who are hypocrites, and are practicing secret sins while they yet wear the name of Christ, and are numbered among His people. They maintain a creditable position in the church, and yet indulge privately in evil habits. This class is the great trial of the ministry, and in every church there are some of them. They profess to love the Lord Jesus, but they are traitors in the camp; they are fair apples, but rotten at the core! Gilded cheats, painted shams, counterfeits, impostors! O, it is a horrible thing to find a man coming to the communion table, who worships the bottle, and goes to bed intoxicated; he talks about the love of Christ, and yet he is a drunk; he partakes of the cup of the Lord, and dotes upon the cup of devils! And there is another who is, perhaps, temperate in diet, and generous to the church, but at the same time he is dishonest in his transactions abroad. He can never be trusted; he pays no one except by compulsion; he has no sense of honor, and yet he has an uppermost seat in the synagogue! Nor is this all, for, alas, we have known some who could talk very loudly about what they knew of personal religion and divine grace, who at the same time were raking in the very lowest kennels of vice! How can I bear to think of such beings!

O, Paul! I do not wonder at you, when I hear you say, “I now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” Such base deceivers are the enemies of the cross of Christ above all others! The Trojans were safe inside, and the legions of the Greeks could do them but little harm as long as they were outside the walls, but when the wooden horse was brought in with the Greeks concealed inside, the city was taken. The enemies inside the church do her the most serious damage—she suffers most from those fearfully presumptuous sinners who are not satisfied with sinning in the King’s kingdom, but must sin in the King’s palace; who dare to bring their filthinesses even to His own table, and pollute it. If any of you who are hypocrites hope to escape, you need dwell deep, indeed! Where are the deep places which can afford refuge for religious pretenders? Where shall liars conceal themselves? O, hypocrite! It may be you have planned your sin so cleverly that the wife of your bosom does not know it; your scheme is so admirably cunning that you carry two faces, and yet no Christian sees other than that Christian mask of yours! Ah, sir, you are a greater fool than I take you for if you think you can deceive your *God*! Your own conscience must be very uneasy. Hypocrites are the devil’s martyrs; they endure a life-long martyrdom of constraint and fear! I have seen, when I was a boy, a juggler in the street throw up half-a-dozen balls, or knives and plates, and continue catching and throwing them, and to me it seemed marvelous! But the *religious* juggler beats all others hands down! He has to keep up Christianity and worldliness at the same time, and catch two sets of balls at once! To be a freeman of Christ and a slave of the world at the same time must need fine acting. One of these days you, sir juggler, will make a slip with one of the balls, and your game will be over; a man cannot always keep it up, and play the game so cleverly at all hours—sooner or later he fails, and then he is made a hissing, and a by-word, and becomes ashamed, if any shame is left in him. O, “dwell deep, you inhabitants of Dedan” if you think to escape from God’s eyes and from the revealing power of His providence. Better were it for you to come right out and throw away your cloaks, and be deceivers no longer; cast off your double-mindedness! “Cease to do evil, learn to do well,” for it is time to seek the Lord, and may God grant you His effectual grace that you may do so at once—before He condemns you to the lowest hell!

II. But now we will use the text INSTRUCTIVELY, in which view the first and natural sense would be that the prophet warns the tribe of Dedan, who had come to live among the Edomites, to go away from them and dwell in the depths of the wilderness, so that when the destroyer came, they might not participate in Edom’s doom. It was the warning voice of mercy, separating its chosen from among the multitude of the condemned.

Now this suggests to me one observation: the people of God, like the tribes of Dedan, to some extent dwell in Edom. Your business, your duty, is to come out from among them. “Be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” I often marvel how some who really love the Lord, and believe His truth, can put up with the errors of the churches with which they are connected. There are churches which preach doctrine that is far other than the gospel of Christ; such, for instance, as the doctrine that unconscious infants are made members of Christ, and children of God by the sprinkling of a little water! God will plague such a church as surely as He is God! Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her plagues! I love the saints in the Church of England, but I marvel at their abiding in such company! It

is our duty to flee as far from error as possible, and enter into no confederacy with falsehood. There are Nonconformist churches where the gospel is not preached, and *intellect* is put in the place of *faith*. I charge you, separate yourselves from such! What fellowship has light with darkness? How can you love the Lord, and be in league with those who despise His word? While some cry out for *unity*, I would say a word for the truth of God. Unity, indeed! What have we to do with that while ritualism and rationalism with their abominations defile the land? I dare no more be a member of a church which does not hold the pure truth of God in the love of it, than I dare join a band of pirates! Our Lord entered into no covenant with Scribe and Pharisee, Sadducee or Herodian, but remained “Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” Better go to heaven alone than to hell in company! Better be true to God, with Abdiel, “Faithful among the faithless found,” than win the applause of the crowd by great liberality, and equal inconsistency.

More important still, however, is the separation of every Christian from worldly habits, customs, and ways. Wherever you are, dear friend, though you must be *in* the world, take care that you are not *of* it! “Come you out from among them: be you separate, says the Lord; touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” It is only in the lonely path of the true disciple of Christ who follows the Lamb where ever He goes, that you can realize your adoption, and cry, “Abba, Father.” Come out from the world—confess yourself to be on the Lord’s side, and then your fellowship with God shall be sweet beyond degree! Range yourself under the divine banner, and by God’s grace remain a separatist from the world until life’s latest hour; so shall you, like Abraham, be a sojourner with God! “Dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan.” Get away from the world’s customs and sins, and above all from its selfish spirit, and groveling aims! Dwell deep in the solitudes where Jesus dwelt; in the lonely holiness which was fostered on the cold mountain’s side, and then shone resplendent amid temptation and persecution! Commit yourself unto no *man*! Call no man master! Lean on no arm of flesh! Walk before the Lord in the land of the living, and so dwell deep, as did your Lord. But I do not wish to enlarge upon that point. The practical matter I am aiming at lies in another direction. My earnest desire is that every saved soul among you may dwell deep, that is to say, that none of you may be superficial Christians, but that you may be deep believers, well rooted plants of grace, thorough, downright, out-and-out Christians; that you may not only dwell in the Rock of Ages, but dwell deep in it! To this let me call your attention.

It is highly important, beloved, that every one of us should have a deep sense of sin, and a profound horror of it; those who have but slight convictions, if those convictions bring them to the Savior, are safe, but such persons should pray the Lord to deepen in them their sense of the evil of sin. Slight thoughts of sin lead to slight thoughts of divine grace, and what can be worse? Nothing is more to be dreaded than a flimsy religion, frail as the spider’s web, unsubstantial as the air. Lord, give me deep repentance; teach me to know my sin, and all the evils which lurk in it; make me to shudder at it, and dread it as a burnt child dreads the fire. Do not, dear friends, be like those people who jauntily confess, “Yes, we are sinners,” but who merely intend thereby to chime in with a general form of speech. Such false speeches are a mockery of God! Thank God if you have been laid low under the law; bless God for deep subsoil plowing and trenching. I desire to feel, every day, that sin is an exceedingly bitter thing, a deadly evil, and a moral poison—the essence of hell! O, to loathe iniquity, and see with self-aborrence its heinous character, for so shall we prize the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love which thought it, the blood which bought it, and the grace which worked it out!

Should your convictions of sin be already deep, then seek to dwell deep as to your faith in Jesus Christ. Much of the faith which passes current in the world is not faith—it is mere talk. We say we believe, but do we believe? We say, “Yes, I trust,” but do we trust? Is it a *real* trust? Is it such a trust as will stand the test of the dying hour? Are we really divorced from our self-confidences, and in very deed married to our Lord Jesus Christ as our only confidence? O, to have solid faith—the faith which will survive the removal of all things, and outlive the general fire! O, brothers and sisters, ask the Lord to deepen your faith, to confirm, establish, and perfect it! And you who are now coming forward to confess your faith in Jesus—if you have only a grain of mustard seed of faith, it will save you, blessed be God! But I exhort you to seek for larger degrees of it. O you who in these regions profess to abide in the Lord,

may you dwell deep in Christ! When you get *upon* the Rock of Christ Jesus you are safe, but when you get *into* the Rock, then you are happy! A man *on* the Rock will be subject to the wind and to the rain, to the damp of dews, and to the heat of the sun; but, O, a man *in* the Rock—it does not matter to him what weather it is—whether it blows or shines, he is sheltered! O, to get fully into Christ; to have a deep experience of our union with Him, and a solemn conviction deepening into a full assurance of our exaltation in Him! Beloved, this is, indeed, to dwell in the Goshen of Christianity! This is to drink the choice wines of the kingdom; the nearer to Jesus, the more perfect our peace! The innermost place of the sanctuary is the most divine!

So would I have you, beloved friends, dwell deep in the matter of Christian study. He who knows himself a sinner, and Christ a Savior, is certainly justified, but we desire to be something *more* than saved. The babe in grace is the Lord's child, but we do not wish to be always *infants*—there is a time when we should be children no more. Christ's babes should grow up to be *men* in Christ Jesus, and my earnest entreaty to all professors, both young and old, is, "Let us seek to deeply study the word of God, that by feeding upon it, we may grow." An instructed Christian is a more useful vessel of honor for the Master than an ignorant believer. I do not say that instruction is all—far from it! There is much in zeal, and with but slender knowledge, a man full of zeal may do a great deal. But if the zealous man has *knowledge* in proportion, how much more will he achieve? Dig deep in your research into the Scriptures, beloved friends! I am always afraid lest any of you should take your doctrinal views from me, and believe doctrines merely because I have taught you to do so. I charge you, if I preach anything that is not according to the Lord's word, away with it! And though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than the gospel of Jesus Christ, away with it! Do not regard our persons for a moment in comparison with divine authority! Study the character of Christ; do not merely know that He is Christ, but *who* He is—whose Son He is, and what He is, and what He did, and what was meant by what He did. Know what He is doing, and what He will do, and all the glorious hopes which cluster around His first and His second advent—all the precious truths of the covenant of grace and the glorious attribute of eternal love. Do not be afraid of what are called the "deep things of God." I do not mean that you young beginners are to give your thoughts to them to the exclusion of the simplicities of the gospel—but at the same time, when you know the Lord savingly, go on to know yet more and more! Comprehend with all saints what are the depths and heights! Entrench yourselves in the precious truths of God's word—no bulwarks are so strong!

Above all things and beyond all things would I earnestly impress upon my beloved friends the need of deep living unto God. There is such a thing as flimsy living in which you pray and pray—yes, but it is a superficial, routine exercise. O, how I bless God when I can pray deep dwelling prayers—when my heart groans unto God, and pours out her very self into His bosom! And how delightful it is to sing one of the deep songs when the innermost heart praises and magnifies God! And how delightful to get into deep fellowship with Jesus Christ till the Lord, Himself, is revealed in you, and you eat His flesh, drink His blood, and have His life in you! Dwell deep, beloved! Those who dwell upon the preacher do not dwell deep—but those who feed upon the Master, Himself, are strong and joyous! Those who live only upon outward ordinances, and do not practice private devotion, and are not abundantly with God in secret communion—those do not dwell deep! Get to the roots of things. The gold mines of Scripture are not in the top soil—you must open a shaft; the precious diamonds of experience are not picked up in the roadway, their secret places are far down. Get down into the vitality, the solidity, the veracity, the divinity of the word of God, and seek to possess with it all the inward work of the blessed Spirit. It is of small use to learn a doctrine unless, in the most emphatic sense, you learn it by heart. John Bunyan intended this when he said that the truths of God which he learned were *burnt* into him. No man in very deed knows a truth of God till it has forced its way into him, and permanently impressed its image upon him. You may have a doctrine hammered into your head by argument till you are quite convinced, and yet no practical result will follow. But, O, if it is stamped into your *heart* with *divine energy*, the consequences will be very different! I am not a Calvinist by choice but because I cannot help it! The truths of God I preach are in me, part and parcel of myself! I do not carry my creed, but my creed carries me! It should be so with us as to all we know of divine truth. This deep knowing, deep feeling, deep living—this it is

that makes sound work, and lasting work for eternity! In one word, as the Lord is bringing in many recruits into this church, and we are glad to receive the rawest among you—my anxious desire is that you may be trained to be good soldiers of Christ, able to endure hardness in years to come. We need you new plants to have a good foothold, so that you may grow up into Christ in later years, and bring forth fruit to His name. We are anxious that you should make a sound beginning, for if a man is about to build a house, if he is unused to building, he may think he is doing well if he sets to work upon the ground as it is, and runs up several courses of bricks; but every man who is an experienced builder knows that instead of doing well, he is wasting his time, since every brick must come down again. If there is no foundation, all he builds will be worthless, and the higher he goes, the greater his loss. O, for a good foundation—to be emptied right out by repentance, and dug deep by conviction, and the rubbish of self thrown out of you—this is a great blessing, for the deeper the foundation, the higher the tower can be carried, and the deeper our sense of sinfulness and nothingness, the greater is the possibility of our being built up into the fullness, strength, and perfection of Jesus Christ our Lord!

If any inquire why at this time I speak such an exhortation as this, I will briefly answer them: brothers and sisters, it is well for us to dwell deep, because trials will surely come. Do you presume, O young Christian, that your warfare is finished, now that you have enlisted? Ah, simple child, “Let not him that puts on his armor boast as though he put it off.” You have come up to the starting point, and you already think the prize is your own! O beloved, you have but commenced running, and your *life* is the length of the race! You will have to run and run till you shall lay down your race with your body—you will never have finished till then! “What? But when I am saved, surely I shall have no more fights.” Listen! The moment you are saved, the battles will *begin*! “But shall I feel an evil heart after I am born-again?” Yes, and more than ever, for the new life that is in you will hate the old nature, and the old Adam will hate the new Adam! There will be a conflict in your soul such as you never knew before, and it will be perpetual! Do not think that Christ has come to send peace into your soul of the sort you look for—He makes no peace with evil, but draws the sword! There will be fights and wars within your spirit until you die! Now, you must have deep work, or else these inward trials will offend you. You remember John Bunyan’s wise picture, in “*Pilgrim’s Progress*,” of Christian and Pliable? Christian read his Bible, and told Pliable of a beautiful city to which he was going, where there were streets of gold and harps of the richest music. “And,” said Pliable, “I will go with you: I would gladly be there.” When he told him all about how Evangelist had instructed him, and when he read to him the roll, “Oh,” said Pliable, “this is very pleasant. The hearing of this is enough to ravish one’s heart. Come on, let us mend our pace.” But, as they went on, the road became very muddy, and by-and-by their feet began to slip, and after a while they were both up to their necks in a slough! “Oh,” said Pliable, “is this that happiness you have told me of? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect between this and our journey’s end? May I get out again with my life; you shall possess the brave country alone for me!” And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the slough which was next to his own house, and Christian saw him no more.

O if it is not a work of grace when you get a little soul trouble, you will say, “Ah, I will have none of this; I thought it was going to be all ‘hallelujahs,’ and ‘bless the Lord!’ I did not look for depressions and bewilderments.” Now, when I hold up my Master’s colors and invite recruits, I am by no means eager to enlist cowards! I need those who for God’s sake, and by His Spirit will go through the Slough of Despond resolved to escape from the City of Destruction! You must “dwell deep,” then, or inward trials will send you back to the world again. There will be outward trials, too—for when a man puts on the name of Christ, the world soon raises a hue and cry against him, and they say, “Here is another of your Methodists,” or, “another of your Presbyterians,” and they straightway bring forth some of their old stock epithets, hoping that to give a dog an ill name may go a long way towards hanging him! They have a fine name for some of you who belong to this church, and they daub you over with it as plentifully as Noah pitched his ark. If the work of grace is not deep in the heart of a ridiculed professor, he will say, “I don’t see why I should be laughed at; I wish to be respectable, and cannot afford to be lowered for religion’s sake.” Ah, yours is a poor religion if a set of grinning sinners can laugh you out of it! Only a plant

in stony soil will be dried up by the heat of persecution—if you are grounded and settled, no trials of cruel mocking or any other assaults of the enemy will overturn you!

Again, there is a necessity that you should dwell deep, beloved, for in these days many errors have gone abroad in the world and many teachers of heresy and infidelity; and if you do not dwell deep they will shake you terribly. When a soul is once established in Christ, and has eaten bread with Him, and seen the things of the kingdom as they are revealed in Him, why, if all the infidels in the world were to come to such a person and object, and object, and object—their efforts would not be worth a farthing—for they would not turn him the breadth of a hair! Even though such a man may be in other respects ignorant and weak, yet, if he has been with Jesus, he will be wise and strong! Communion with Christ braces up the spirit! He who has been plunged into the sea of divine Fellowship is invulnerable! A certain skeptic had often troubled an aged Christian woman about many things, and upon many points he had ridiculed her. At last she ended the fight by a declaration of faith which cleared all the ground at once. He said to her, “Why, you are not such a fool as to believe that a great fish swallowed Jonah! You cannot believe such a monstrous fable.” “Man,” she said, “God’s word says it, and if the Lord had said that *Jonah* swallowed the *whale*, I would have believed Him!” Her faith in the veracity of God explained all difficulties, and as she was forever settled upon that matter, there was no use in arguing against her. Men call this blind faith, but I call it faith with her eyes open looking alone to God! When faith dwells thus deep, the heaviest shells that our foes can hurl from the Krupp guns of their logic are no more injurious to the fortifications of our comfort, than so many paper pellets thrown by a schoolboy! No—

*“Should all the forms that men devise
Assail my soul with treacherous art,
I’ll call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart.”*

But you must dwell deep to be able to do that, otherwise arguments with skeptics and papists will be your terror and your danger—and difficulties will arise which will greatly mar your peace. May you have grace to dwell so near to God that it shall be impossible for evil insinuations to enter into your spirit!

Dwell deep, dear friends, for there are seasons coming when all your grace will be needed. I have never heard of a man coming to mischief through having too much grace; I never heard yet of any person falling into danger through living too near to God; nor do I think most men suffer through being too careful in self-examination, or too anxious to be right. Presumption brings a thousand evils, but holy carefulness brings very few, if any. You will have to die, beloved, soon, and though you may rejoice in the prospect of being with Christ, death, after all, is no child’s play; he who would die triumphantly will need God’s arm to bear him up. The river is in itself a deep and chilling river, and if the Lord, who is immortality and life, is not with us, it will be a *drowning* river! But if we have solid faith, we shall pass over safely. But, mark you; no sham faith will help you then! What do those poor souls do who have dreamed of heaven, and discover when they are dying that their hope is a mere dream? O, what will false church members do? What will the hypocritical deacon do? Above all, what will the unfaithful minister do, who, when he comes to die, finds that he has preached to others, and has neither part nor lot in this matter himself? What will he do when it is too late to take to another ship—to have all shipwrecked forever? What horror this must be! God grant it may not be so with any of you, and therefore, beloved, in fair weather look to your vessel! It was a shameful thing; say what anyone will, to send the ship to sea we have been reading of lately, that was all worm-eaten and her iron, even her *iron*, quite rusted through. It would have been infinitely better to have had her well examined, and not to have sent an unworthy ship out at all. But you see they ran on a beach, and happily saved all the crew. But if you go to sea *spiritually* in a leaky ship like that, there is no saving you—you are lost and lost forever! Oh, if you have got into this professional boat which is rotten, get out of her though you lose all your comfort, and see all your experience go down! Let it go down if it is a lie! It is better that a man be a beggar and be free, than be a prince and be a liar! What care I for the gewgaw tinsel crown that men put on who strut upon the boards of a theater? Shall I esteem the mimic sovereigns, and bow down to them as if they

were true kings and princes? No! The poorest man who is himself is better than the grandest man who is a sham!

God grant that we may stand the test of dying; but there is a still more terrible test than dying, for some sleep quietly through death, but oh, the *judgment*! I see two ponderous scales huge as hemispheres of this great globe, and there I see the weights—the standard weights of eternal justice. Into yonder scales every one of us must go, and what if there should be heard the dreadful sound, “Mene, mene, Tekel”? “*You are weighed in the balances, and found wanting!*” There will be no hope, then, of making up the short weight, or of coming up to the standard! Lost then, we shall be cast away forever! O, if you only get an inch towards heaven, let it be a *safe* inch—for a safe *inch* is better than a counterfeit yard; and one drachma of grace is better than a million tons of profession! One genuine tear is better than a sea full of washing your hands in outward ceremonies! Let your religion be real, dear friends. “Dwell deep.”

And I will give this other reason—dwell deep because those who live near to God, and are substantial in godliness, are the happiest of people. The top of the cup of religion may be bitter, but it grows sweeter the deeper down you drink. The cup at Satan’s banquet is sweet upon the brim where the bubbles glow like rainbows, but, ah, the horrid dregs of it! The cup that Christ gives has no dregs—it has at its bottom the sweetness of the wines on the lees, well refined. And O, the inexpressible sweetness when you get to the bottom of all—where there is no bottom—when you get a drink of eternal joys and never-ending blessings! While deep living gives a man more happiness, it also endows him with more strength. Some single Christians of my acquaintance are worth 20 ordinary ones, because they enter into the very marrow of religion, and then impress others with the reality of it. I know at this moment Christian women who are worth 50 ordinary professing women! I would not say the others are not very good, in their way, but they are superficial compared with these deep-taught daughters of Zion! O God, if the church is to be strong, it must be through those who dwell deep!

And so, beloved, let me close by saying, dwell deep, for you will glorify God the most. The nearer you get to the sun, the brighter you will be. The nearer you live to Christ, the more like He you will be. Dwell deep, beloved! Beware of levity in godliness! Beware of superficiality! Beware of skimming! Seek to enjoy the deep, the blessed, and the true reality! The Lord grant it to you for His name’s sake. But still, let me say to any who have not begun the divine life, this is not for you just now. I talked to you last night, and the night before, and you know I bade you come to Christ just as you were. And so I do now, for saving work is coming and touching even the hem of the Redeemer’s garment. If you have touched the hem of His garment, do not be satisfied with that! Go on to know Him more and long, like Simeon, to take Him up in your arms, and say, “This Christ is *mine*—the blessed Christ—*mine* forever and forever!” God bless you, beloved friends!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOHN 15:1-16.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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